

An Interactive Web Site for Ethics Training: <http://storiesandquestions.com>

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This paper reports on the construction and use of a web site for ethics training. The paper is divided into three parts. Various uses of the web site as a delivery vehicle for ethics training are outlined in the first part. Practical advantages of an ethics training instrument usable by individuals at their own pace, place, and time are discussed in the second part. The web site itself and its operation are described in the third part located after the references. The paper ends with suggestions for further work in adding more seminars to the web site, further measuring the web site's effectiveness, and developing guidelines for facilitators.

Ethics Training With The Web Site

The computer-based ethics training instrument is conceived as a delivery technique. What might such a training instrument contain?

After the apprentice model lost its effectiveness for ethics training it was replaced by a recital of the appropriate ethics codes (Table I). Discussion of case studies is used for ethics training that is more specialized and pointed toward particular disciplines and tasks. Both training in ethics codes and in case studies can be delivered by this sequenced text-and-question technique. The present web site adds a third category to the ethics training instrument, awareness training.

Experience with the web site has shown different results from bulk presentation and from

sequenced presentation. Bulk presentation, where the whole story and all of the questions are presented at one time, usually draws either no response or a "head trip" response. The sequenced presentation of a part of the story at a time or an exercise with the story, accompanied by a single question, appears to encourage the thoughtfulness and inner work that lead to real attitude change. It is that experience that leads to the statement of the previous paragraph that the necessary ethics training of the ethics codes themselves, and of applicable case studies, can be delivered by this sequenced text-and-question

Types

Codes

Case studies

Awareness

Table I: Types of ethics training

Training	Message
Codes	What are the limits?
	What can I get away with?
Case studies	What are the limits?
	What can I get away with?
Awareness	What is going on here?
	What can I do about it?
	What might be the right thing to do?

Table II Messages from various types of ethics training

technique.

The implication that trainees get from recital of appropriate ethics codes or from discussion of case studies is "What are the limits?" The message conveyed by such training is "What can I get away with?" (Table II).

By contrast, awareness deals with questions such as "What is going on here?" and "What can I do about it?" The message conveyed by awareness training is "What might be the right thing to do?"

The reader may sense that I find the "What might be the right thing to do?" more significant and necessary in ethics training because it goes beyond the given guidelines. However, knowledge of applicable ethics codes and of their application is case studies is an essential and equally necessary part of ethics training. I have discussed the multiplicity of the overlapping ethics codes that researchers are subject to and some of the conflicts between those codes in an encyclopedia chapter (1).

Results of ethics training by recital of appropriate ethics codes usually are measured by attendance at the training, or by recall of the

Training	Results reported as
Codes	Attendance or recall
Case studies	Discussion of case
A wareness	Attitude changes

Table III: Results from various types of ethics training reported as

contents (Table III).

Results of ethics training with case studies are measured by qualities of participants' discussion of the cases. Results of awareness training can be assessed by noting attitude changes. The same question is asked near the beginning and near the end of each seminar. In experience so far with the web site, and in the talks and seminars on which the web site is modeled, the response after the second time the question is asked is much better elaborated, is more grounded in the story, and shows a better grasp of how the story applies to the participant's own life, problems, and actions. Changes become apparent in the perceived self image of the seminar participant. The changes are reinforced by the facilitator calling attention to them or asking whether the participant has noticed the changes.

Practical Advantages Of Web Site Ethics Training

Self-directed learning: No travel or time off from work

The web site is an alternative learning mode for ethics training which permits study and testing at each individual's time, place, and pace. It reduces or eliminates trying to get everyone together at a given time and place, with resultant schedule changes and resistance to "a waste of time."

"Valuing of self-directed learning" (2) applies to academic institutions and to needs for ethics training there as well as in industrial and governmental laboratories. Gunzburger writes. "The survey results indicate that most schools have not established systems for the valuing of curriculum time that include balancing values for lecture time and values for self-directed learning."

One surprise of experience with the web site was the amount of motivation which is generated by the sequenced self-study. No coaxing or arguments by the facilitator were needed to get clients to complete a seminar. If there was no response to a session within two weeks, re-presentation of the segment was sufficient to elicit a response, often with an explanation of what the holdup had been.

Engendering an ethical environment in self and in work place

An unspoken assumption seems to be that infractions of an ethics code are deliberate; if not deliberate, then the incident was an "accident" (3). Based on that assumption, an infraction can be stopped and the perpetrator exposed and/or punished.

Inherent conflicts and inconsistencies between the different kinds of ethics codes, as well as in individual codes themselves, are discussed in the encyclopedia article previously referred to (1). There are few, if any, places where those caught in a conflict between different kinds of codes can get help and advice. The encyclopedia article concludes with a training program that I have designed for situations like that, and this training program has now been put on the web site described in this paper. In brief, the seminar participant who uses the web site ethics training learns where to look for the advice needed to cope with overlapping

and conflicting ethics codes

A different way of stating the problem is found in a letter to a college student who asked for advice on ethical behavior. In the letter, C. G. Jung describes codes of moral values as “general and not specific,” and therefore “they don’t exactly apply to individual situations.” Jung’s advice to the student is “try to live as consciously, as conscientiously, and as completely as *possible* (italics are Jung’s) and learn who you are and who or what it is that ultimately decides” (4).

The problem also has been stated in a law review article about ethics in government, which applies equally well to ethics in science (5): “Our current obsession with investigating and prosecuting individual wrongdoing may actually prove counterproductive in our efforts to promote ethical [science], promoting instead public cynicism about [science]. To counteract this emphasis on individual wrongdoing, we need to pay more attention to ensuring that [science] institutions are designed to engender an ethical environment.”

All three ways of stating the problem contradict the beginning assumption—the old vocabulary—that infractions of ethics codes are deliberate or an “accident.” All three statements indicate that infractions of ethics codes are NOT always deliberate and that the perpetrators may not even be aware of their inadvertent and often avoidable errors affecting research integrity.

Jung’s advice to “learn who you are” to behave ethically is exactly the aim of the training program that I described in the encyclopedia article. The training is to live with the opposites in resolving conflicts of various ethics codes within which researchers have to work (1, 6). It is that kind of training program that I have now brought out of the lecture and workshop stage and put into the web site for one-on-one work with an experienced ethics consultant. It is a self-contained course that meets a previously unrecognized need.

Present Status And Future Work

At this time the web site contains four such seminars. One of the seminars deals with collegiality and civility in the work place or, to see it from the other side, conflict resolution in highly polarized situations (7). Another deals with how to find a moral advisor in a hierarchically structured work environment (8). Both describe work environments that often lead

to alleged scientific misconduct and how to deal with them creatively.

Material is at hand for expansion of the web site to about 12 seminars during the coming year. The immediate next additions to the web site will be four seminars dealing with the origins of science (9). Together, they show four successive stages of scientists working “consciously, conscientiously and as fully as possible.” I have used that material about twenty times in national tour lectures for the American Chemical Society under the title of “Nature and Gods, Science and Scientists.”

Further research aspects of this work consist of:

1. Adding more seminars to the web site.
2. Assessing its effectiveness. Effectiveness can be gauged by looking at changed opinions, feelings, or assessments of problem situations by seminar participants as the seminar progresses. Records of such changes are already being kept while maintaining seminar participants’ analytical confidentiality, which is a hallmark of the seminars in workshop and web site modes.
3. Developing guidelines for facilitators. As more people use this method of self-study for ethics training, they too may want to become facilitators and learn more by helping others to start self-study in scientific ethics.

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The Web Site

Introduction

Welcome to this web site, the home of “*Stories and Questions*,” a personal journey in self enrichment. Here is a method of exploring who one is by reading short stories and responding in the moment to simple questions. These stories allow one to stop and feel, and the question permits feelings about one’s life and its direction. *Stories and Questions* is a series of individual seminars facilitated by Rudy Marcus. Rudy has done stories and questions for 16 years (and if one counts his research experience in the sciences, for 50 years) and has experienced for himself their ability to effect personal change.

On this web site, you can start your own journey of exploration. Please read the Introduction and follow its suggestion for “How Do I Start?” Feel free to contact me at: rudy@storiesandquestions.com

This is an introduction to seminars designed for self-study. Each session or envelope contains a story or direction for an exercise with the material of the story. You, the participant in this seminar, encounter the story or do the exercise, and then respond to one or more question(s) on this web site. The response can be in writing or any other form of expression, and can be telephoned or sent by e-mail or post to: response@storiesandquestions.com. Rudy will then send you the next session (e-mail) or envelope (paper) of the self-study seminar. The method is adapted for self-study from group workshops using different stories and questions.

Method

If you were using this material at a group workshop or seminar, you would be sitting in a circle. Each person in the circle would hear from a facilitator what is on the web site as Session I, or what is in envelope I in the paper version — a short story, and then a question to which each member of the circle responds. It is not a

discussion group, and there is not a consensus to be reached. Rather, each response is respected as that person’s truth at that particular time and place. In such a workshop, there would be a long break after the discussion of the material in Session I. That break might even take the form of lunch, a nap, a walk in the woods, and/or a swim. More thoughts about the story, and additional responses to the questions occur, and those might be written in a journal or one’s workshop notes.

Stories

In a group seminar using this material, the facilitator would have warned participants NOT to identify with any of the characters in the story. That is important and it applies as well to the self-study.

The seminar participant encounters the story as if the participant were seeing it on a stage. The participant is not on the stage with the story characters. The participant is in the audience watching the actions of all the characters, being privy to the knowledge, habits, and actions of all the characters at that point in the story.

In the language of psychology, the participant brings one’s ego to the story, one’s own awareness, rather than identifying with, taking the part of, one or the other character in the story. The more cross-cultural the story is—for example, all cultures are likely to have creation stories, and stories about the origin of science—the more universally valid or typical do those characters seem, and the easier it is for the hearer of the story to say, “Hey, that character IS me, and that is MY story.” Try NOT to do that.

The comparison of story with stage is quite apt because as action on stage involves feelings and emotions of onlookers, so encounter with story can activate an individual participant’s inner knowledge and experience analogous to the story character(s)’ knowledge and experience. That can happen whether or not the participant had previously been aware of any feeling or actions corresponding to those of one or more characters in the story. A shorthand phrase for such activation is that one or another of those story characters is constellated in a participant by the participant’s work with story and questions.

Another way of saying this is that no one character in the story is or describes the whole of me, but it often describes a part of me. I may not have been aware of that part of me prior to my work with that story.

Questions

If you encountered this material in a group workshop, the facilitator would ask one or more questions after each story. Responses to the question are addressed not to the facilitator, and not to other members of the group but to the center of the circle. The story is “myth,” a technical term that has been defined by Joseph Campbell as something that happened and continues to happen to many people at many times and places, in contrast to history which happened at one time and place to one person or a group of persons (and, a scientist would add, in contrast to science which is something that happens and is replicable under specified conditions). As a myth, the story is considered to bubble out of the center of the group circle rather than from the facilitator. Similarly, the question asked is considered to be coming from the center of the circle, and therefore responses are addressed to the center of the circle rather than to a person at the perimeter of the circle or to the facilitator. That should minimize any onus on, or defensiveness by, a respondent about one’s response. Similarly, others in the circle are expected to respect any response since it is addressed to the center and not to them. Responses are not to be discussed or argued with, particularly not by the facilitator.

The discussion circle consists of center and perimeter. Without participation from the perimeter, in the form of responses to questions, the circle and therefore the seminar would not exist. It is important for each participant to hear oneself verbalize a response, even if that response sounds similar to one that has already been given.

The questions are designed to evoke choice and feelings rather than to test knowledge or recall. Reasons for, or explanations of, choices may be asked for. Respondents will be asked to stick to the subject matter of a question because one of the easiest ways of escaping a choice or a feeling is to talk about something else. Similarly, the question asked at a session is about the story told in that particular session, not about the end of the story or about another story. Each question is a universe of discourse, embedded in the universe of discourse of the story of that particular session. (By definition, a universe of discourse is a separate world surrounded by an impermeable barrier.) A participant is free to state different choices, feelings, and opinions at

any time. Such changes are seen as fresh insights rather than as error or shame for earlier choices.

“I’ve heard that story before”

Of course you have heard that story before. It is part of our cultural heritage. It is a myth. It is universal truth. You and I have that story in our bones.

But in the group workshop I am not listening to, and in the self-study I am not reading, that story to find out how it ends, “who done it,” or what the facts are. I am called on to take a stand vis-a-vis that story at this particular moment. I am listening to it, or reading it, to see whether I still have the same answers to questions evoked by the story or to see whether the story evokes new questions.

Bruno Bettelheim has noted that a fairy tale asked for most frequently by a child most likely describes what that child feels to be its most vital problem at that stage of its life. (For example, the Grimm Brothers’ fairy tale that gripped my emotions for many decades was “The Goose Girl.” Like that protagonist, I also lost home, country, and native tongue as a pre-pubescent.)

Ritual has been described as a process of activating a myth. In that sense repeated exposure to a story—by rereading it, by noting whether responses to story and questions change, and by asking new questions about it—reconstellates powerful, often numinous, characters within myself.

Instructions

You are not at a group workshop now, so you have an opportunity to create your own pace and place. Find a private space and time for 45 minutes, turn off the telephone, put out the cat, and open one of the stories. Read the story, consider it, and respond to the question(s) in writing or other art form. Send your response to: response@storiesandquestions.com. Stay with the story for a day or more—preferably a week. Look at the story, questions, and your responses occasionally, and write down any additional thoughts. Note any additional insights.

Your response will be acknowledged and the next Session will be sent to you. Repeat the process with the next Session. Continue in that manner until the final Session.

Because this kind of work is an ongoing process and new insights keep popping up, it is well to keep the Session materials, your

responses, and the facilitator's comments in a notebook. You will find that collection a growing resource as new insights arise. You will also find that it becomes a valued friend and adviser in dark times.

Which Story?

Four stories are available as Sequenced Self Studies at this time. They are:

- Cracked Pot (11 sessions)
- Moses Mendelssohn's Dream (5 sessions)
- Rainmaker (5 sessions)
- Becket (8 sessions)

Any of those Sequenced Self-Studies is worth doing in its own right in the same way that one goes to a movie or takes a trip for adventure, enjoyment, or enrichment.

Just as movies or trips also may be taken with specific purposes in mind, such as information or education, these stories can be used for specific purposes as well as in their own right. For example, *Cracked Pot* and *Moses Mendelssohn's Dream* have been used for working with self-worth problems. *Rainmaker* has been useful for conflict resolution in highly polarized situations. *Becket* is a good practicum for finding moral advisers in hierarchically structured organizations. Both *Rainmaker* and *Becket* are excellent self-studies for ethics training.

How Do I Start?

On the following pages [of the web site] you will find the first Session of each of the available self-studies. Choose one, follow the instructions, and send your response to:
response@storiesandquestions.com.

Rudy will then comment on your response and activate the next session of your self-study.